



Greater Eastside Lacrosse League and Issaquah Youth Lacrosse

Program directors from the Eastside (of Lake Washington) came together earlier this year to form the Greater Eastside Youth Lacrosse League (“GELL” at <http://www.eastsidelacrosse.org/>) for our regional boys youth lacrosse programs. These programs – Issaquah Youth Lacrosse (including Liberty and Snoqualmie Valley/Mt. Si), Bellevue, Eastlake, Kirkland, Mercer Island, The Overlake School, Redmond, Sammamish, Tahoma and Woodinville – had previously been organized as the “Eastern Region” of the Boys Youth Lacrosse of Washington (<http://www.bylw.org/>).

The GELL programs include some of the larger and more established programs in the region. The needs of those programs differ from the needs of many other programs in the state. The formation of GELL allows these programs to collaboratively pursue some new approaches league organization and player development that ultimately lead toward many goals shared with BYLW – primarily grow the sport’s reach and impact in the state of Washington and nationally.

GELL’s focus :

- GELL is committed to building youth programs that are directly aligned with the high school programs into which they feed. This model has proven to be the most successful approach not only in the lacrosse “hot beds” of Maryland and New York but also in other sports, most notably the top high school football programs here in our own state. See [GELL Rules and Regulations, Section 5, page 4](#). Towards this end, GELL is committed to expanding the sport so that all public high schools in the districts represented in GELL have lacrosse teams. The same goal applies to private schools who wish to develop lacrosse programs with philosophies that are aligned with GELL members and the high school programs they feed.
- GELL has the majority of the advanced (7/8 grade, Senior “A”) programs in the state, and our shared intent is to make this a very competitive league, playing according to rules that these players will play be in High School, and establishing a season of league play that culminates in a true regional champion through a formal playoff system. The BYLW’s focus is more recreational in nature and does not allow member programs to publish scores and standings, and to hold playoffs.

- GELL eligibility rules demand a stronger connection between eligibility for youth and the affiliated high school programs than does BYLW. GELL programs are strictly bound to not accept players from outside their assigned territories and/or school district defined areas and to accept all players who meet the eligibility rules. GELL programs believe that the connection to and loyalty for a community-based (high school) program starts at the youth level. Sports such as soccer which do not adhere to these principals often wind up splitting down club versus high school lines, and it is usually the high school programs that suffer as a result.

The GELL has a full slate of teams at all levels, and is scheduling a full season of play within the region. While there may be a few games between GELL and BYLW teams, they will be the exception and not the norm.

There is some mis-information circulating about membership in BYLW and in GELL. There were several Eastside programs invited to participate in GELL who chose not to participate because of the “play-for” eligibility rules - in particular, the rules that restrict recruiting from other defined regional programs. If this is an area of importance to you, please review the bylaws and rules of each league and member youth programs on their respective web sites (GELL at <http://www.eastsidelacrosse.org/>, and BYLW at <http://www.bylw.org/>). If you still have questions after that review, please feel free to contact us at info@issaquahyouthlacrosse.com.

